

**A Christmas Fayre
to remember**

**The ASPIRE group
students travelled
to New York for a
cultural visit**

**Westholme
welcomes babies!**

WESTHOLME LIFE

AUTUMN/WINTER NEWSLETTER 2015



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**WESTHOLME
SCHOOL**

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AMAZING ACHIEVEMENTS



PRIZEGIVING

The annual Senior School Prizegiving Ceremony was, once again, held at King George's Hall, in front of a large audience of parents and friends. We were delighted to welcome Old Westholmian, Professor Sophie Scott, as our Prize Presenter who commented on how returning to King George's Hall brought back many fond memories of Prizegiving Ceremonies from her time as a student.

Chairman of Governors, Mr Brian Marsden, presented his opening remarks, before Mrs Horner's review of the School year - done so via a presentation of photographic highlights. The traditional report of 'A Sixth Form View of School Life' presented to us by this year's Head Girl, Flora Robson, and Deputy Head Girls, Gabriela Sharp and Salonee Shah, was, as ever, extremely entertaining. Their talk, based on Shakespeare's 'Seven Ages of Man', took the audience on a journey of the 'Seven Years of Senior School'.

Prizes were then distributed by Professor Scott, who, upon finishing her official duties, spoke to the School and gave us a wonderful insight into her career as a researcher in human communication and the human brain.

Musical performances from the Chamber Choir and solos performed by Flora Robson and Ella Holt were amazing. What a fantastic evening of celebrating the academic achievements of our School!

RESULTS DAYS

We were all proud and delighted to announce another impressive set of A-level and GCSE results.

Well over a third of this year's Sixth Form leavers' grades were at the very top level of A*/A, and almost 70% at A*- B. In 22 subjects Westholme students achieved a 100% rate, demonstrating the depth and range of their abilities. This was reflected in the variety of further study choices: Westholme students were accepted on courses ranging from Veterinary Science and Medicine to Law, Radiography, Graphic Design and Architecture. We were also delighted that by 10.30am, all students had been guaranteed a place at university - what a brilliant result!

GCSE results at Westholme were also a cause for celebration. Three quarters of all grades were at B or above, and 43% at A*/A.

"These are a very pleasing set of results from a hard working group of students", commented Principal, Mrs Horner.

"Some outstanding results came out of certain subjects; in German we had 100% A*/A grades and in Ethics, Philosophy & Religion a staggering 58% of all grades were at A*. Staff and students alike are to be congratulated for their dedication and commitment. It is very pleasing to see so many of the year group staying on at Westholme to gain the further benefit of our teaching, ensuring that they will fulfil their potential."



Evie Jones and Kate Berry celebrate receiving their A-level results.

Choir Tour 2015

This year, the Westholme Choir travelled to Barcelona for the 2015 Choir Tour. The group travelled by coach from Blackburn to sunny Spain and whilst there, captivated audiences with their moving performances.

One of the first trips of the tour was to see the iconic church, La Sagrada Familia and everyone agreed how magnificent it was to view it from outside as well as in. This was followed by a gentle stroll up Las Ramblas which provided some well deserved time for relaxation, shopping and food before they were ready to be picked up for their performance of Karl Jenkins' *Mass for Peace*, *The Armed Man* in the St Gaieta Church. Ruth Hodson, Sophie Hodson, Evie Jones and Elysia Kenyon all performed wonderful solos and everyone was delighted to see that Mrs Davenport and Mrs Waldron had travelled out to Spain to support the group in their travels.



A visit to the PortAventura theme park was on the agenda for day two. After an early morning swim for 21 willing volunteers (6.30am!), everyone was soon enjoying the thrills and spills of the theme park and students seemed to have the time of their lives. With many using 'fast passes' to combat the stress of queuing up, and others finding a slower pace altogether more suitable, an enjoyable day was had by all.

A visit to the Nou Camp football stadium for some, and the opportunity to enjoy a peaceful time at the Poble Espanyol viewing different types of Spanish house construction and culture were also enjoyed.

An audience of 800 had gathered at the Parc de la Ciutadella for the Choir's final performance and the crowd seemed to enjoy clapping and dancing along to the music of Beyoncé, Frozen and the Swing Band, even laughing at Mr Millest's attempted jokes before the translator had time to translate them!

Overall, it was a fantastic tour; everyone was extremely proud to have been able to represent the School and to perform in concerts of high quality music that brought pleasure to the audiences. Mr Millest is eagerly planning the next one... Paris and Brussels here we come!



EUROPEAN DAY OF LANGUAGES



As always, European Day of Languages was marked with much celebration at Westholme.

We welcomed two special guests to School to speak to students about the importance of languages. Firstly, Mr Sajjad Karim, MEP, spoke to some of the students about his role as a Member of the European Parliament and how he secured his position. Secondly, former student, Fiona Kinloch (2012), informed students about her experiences since leaving Westholme. Fiona, a keen linguist, left Westholme to study languages at the University of Warwick and has recently returned from her year working abroad as part of her degree.

A delicious banquet was enjoyed by the whole School at lunch time with foods from many European countries on offer including paella, moussaka and French pastries to name but a few! Many thanks to the catering staff for putting on such a spectacular spread.

Other activities enjoyed throughout the day by students of all ages included the languages department quiz, which then saw students listen to a greeting from various members of staff working out what language they were speaking and Madame Thorpe's 'A-Z of Languages' game at the Junior School. Each square on the board represented a country; whatever country they landed on, they had to say "hello" in that language. It really was great fun and a wonderful way to take part in the celebrations of the day and to hear so many languages being spoken throughout the School.

Thank you to the languages department for organising such a fabulous day!



Harvest Festival

Harvest time was celebrated at our Infant and Junior Schools. Children donated provisions to those less fortunate than themselves and took the opportunity to really think about this special time of year.



Children at the Infant School also celebrated Harvest with a special assembly, and welcomed Mrs Barbara Foster from the Blackburn Food Bank into School. She came to talk to the children about all the good work the charity does and who they help in the local area. In the lead up to the assembly, children had been collecting provisions and had brought them into School for Mrs Foster to take to the Food Bank on behalf of Westholme. She was delighted with the amount of provisions collected and said that it would help many local people - well done to everyone.



The Junior School service was held at St Silas' Church and was led by the Year 3 and 4 students. Beautiful Harvest time readings, poems and prayers were recited to a packed church of parents, grandparents and friends. Harvest hymns were also sung.

Reverend David Kennedy drew the service to a close by thanking the children for their donations of food, which he explained would be most gratefully received by those in need. He praised the students for their lovely service and thanked the entire Westholme community for their generosity at this time of year.

Remembrance Day

Remembrance Day was commemorated at Westholme with due respect and reflection. In an assembly, led by members of the History department, students at Senior School listened to stories about the Battle of Britain, which was particularly relevant this year as it is the 75th anniversary of this famous Battle. Powerful film footage, accompanied by photographs and readings by the students allowed us to reflect on the importance of marking this important date in the calendar. After singing the rousing hymn, 'I Vow To Thee My Country', and observing the traditional

two minute silence, a poem was read by Head of History, Mr Stewart, before a moving rendition of The Last Post was played. A Poppy wreath was laid by some of our students who were dressed in their cadet and Scout uniforms which rounded off the assembly.

Infant School children also marked Remembrance Day by colouring or making their own Poppy for a special competition. Winners were selected from each Year group and £92 was raised from the competition entries for the Royal British Legion.



BAE Workshop and Roadshow

Students at Westholme have benefited from the knowledge and expertise of locally based experts, BAE Systems, who visited Westholme on two occasions this term.

Last year, three of our Year 11 students visited BAE Systems where they met Carol Vorderman who highlighted the importance of women working in engineering. Following on from this event, earlier this term, we welcomed a group of female BAE engineers to host a workshop for Year 11 students. In their groups, students completed a number of activities, which allowed them to develop their team building and problem solving skills. One of the tasks involved constructing a wind tunnel and the modification of various items which were placed inside it. This was a fabulous opportunity for students to use their creativity to overcome challenges and undoubtedly enhanced their studies of Maths and Physics.



The second event was part of the BAE Systems Educational Roadshow, which saw representatives from both BAE and the RAF visit Westholme to talk about careers in science and engineering.

BAE Systems work in close partnership with the RAF, as they design, build and test planes and submarines. Year 7 and 8 students were given an interactive and informative talk about the work carried out by both organisations as well as new innovations in the industry. The main purpose of the talk was to inform students about the various career paths they could enter into with BAE and the RAF. Our visitors also emphasised that these careers could be pursued by both males and females, helping to break down the ideology that engineering is an exclusively male occupation.

Students enjoyed various demonstrations which took place throughout the morning, including seeing an LED jacket powered solely by a bicycle, a laser light show and the use of a Rubens' Tube. The tube, which is filled with gas, was set alight to show the relationship between sound waves and pressure; the flames altered in size depending on the pitch of the sound.

New scientific innovations were also discussed, such as 'Smart Skin' technology, where the nerve receptors on human skin are replicated for the use in planes (this will enable them to temporarily repair themselves when compromised) and 'biomimetics', where objects in nature are imitated for use in technology, such as the construction of aerodynamic vehicles. Engrossed students then had the opportunity to ask questions and were keen to learn more about careers in both the RAF and at BAE Systems.

A big thank you to our visitors for taking the time to come to School and for leaving us with the message that Engineering is a career that can be pursued by both boys and girls; a sentiment that is certainly echoed here at Westholme!



Westholme Juniors head to the continent!

Many students in Years 5 and 6 took part in the annual Junior School French Trip to Hardelot, in Northern France, over the half term holidays.

All of the children enjoyed many activities including visits to a snail farm, a traditional French market and a chocolate factory. They also took time to remember those who had given up their lives fighting for freedom when they made the journey to Vimy and visited the Canadian War Cemetery, where they had a tour of the trenches.

Other highlights were a trip to Wellington Quarry, part of an underground hideout used by British soldiers in World War 1 and a visit to a local bakery. Whilst here they learnt about how handmade bread is made before having a go at cutting and rolling some croissants themselves. The pupils said 'Au revoir' to France with a traditional picnic before they crossed the channel, homeward bound!



DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD



Congratulations to all students who completed their Duke of Edinburgh's award.

During the summer holidays, fourteen Sixth Form students travelled to the Scottish highlands for their 4-day Gold Final DofE expedition. Highlights were the beautiful snow covered peaks, pleasant walks alongside lochs, rolling rivers and waterfalls. Other, not so fond memories, included clouds of midges, bog hopping and getting wet, sore feet! Congratulations to all the students on successfully completing their expedition. It is no mean feat to carry everything and navigate 80km in 4 days whilst

camping wild with no facilities or sign of civilisation and our students showed real determination to succeed.

Many of our Year 11 students also completed their Bronze Final expeditions in the Derbyshire Dales. Well done to all of the girls for successfully completing their expedition, and working well in their teams whilst displaying good navigation skills. They enjoyed it so much, they are already thinking ahead to their Silver expeditions!



New York, New York!

Westholme's ASPIRE programme aims to give students the opportunity to move out of their comfort zones and consider ideas which may lie outside their own fields of expertise. The group meet once a fortnight and attend a series of events which offer academic challenge and stimulation. Over the October half term break, some ASPIRE'ing' students travelled to New York for a cultural visit.

At 4:30am on Saturday 17 October, members of Westholme's ASPIRE group arrived at Manchester Airport, tired but excited, and set off on their long-anticipated journey to New York. Six days later, they returned more tired, less excited and, in many cases, a lot poorer! Thankfully, in the intervening time they had enjoyed a culturally varied and enriching trip to New York, the memories from which will stay with them for a long time.

In the space of five days, the group visited four museums; Ellis Island Immigration Museum, 9/11 Museum, MOMA and the Natural History Museum. They saw New York from some great vantage points including on a glorious Sunday morning from the Liberty Island cruise, by night from the top of the Empire State Building and, on the final morning, from the High Line. The group spent time in Central Park



and covered many, many miles of New York, from Times Square to Greenwich Village, on foot and by the subway. The students also spent lots of time and money in Macy's, their new home from home.

The tone was set on the first afternoon when they encountered famous actor, Damian Lewis in the park near their hotel. Mr Dumbill and Miss Smith demonstrated impressive restraint and did not approach the man who rumours suggest may well be the next James Bond, but who for now remains Henry VIII from Wolf Hall or Nicholas Brody from Homeland, depending on your taste. The Lower Sixth students were particularly pleased when he cheerfully posed for several 'selfies' with them.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable visit and a great way for the ASPIRE group to begin its programme of educational and cultural visits. The destination for next October's trip will be announced soon so keep your eyes peeled!



Rocking and Rucking (at Westholme!)

The flourishing partnership between Westholme and Preston Grasshoppers Rugby Club has seen students benefit from their coaching expertise. This term, Year 5 and 6 boys have enjoyed training sessions with the club.



Since the start of November, full back for Grasshoppers, Sean Taylor, has been coaching the boys, who have come on leaps and bounds with their Rugby skills. They have learnt how to pass and move with the ball as well as exercises which has increased their confidence in tackling an opponent. Team work has been essential and the boys have learnt how to support their team mates when moving forward in the game. Our team are looking forward to a weekend training session at Preston Grasshoppers in readiness for a match against their own U11 squad and have even been invited for a post-match tea!

Many thanks to Grasshoppers for providing our boys with superb coaching; the sessions for our Senior boys will begin in January.



Fantastic Floodlights!

After months of preparation, Westholme's new floodlights were installed on the all weather pitch at Senior School. To celebrate this new development, an official 'Switch On' was held where Warren Hegg, former Lancashire cricketer, kindly 'flicked the switch!' One of the first official fixtures under the new floodlights was the 6-a-side Primary Schools' Football Tournament.



The winning Cup team from Parbold Douglas



We welcomed 12 teams who all took part in a bid to become the indoor 6-a-side Champions for 2015. The first round saw teams compete to qualify for either the Cup or Plate competition which was contested during a second round of matches. The all weather pitch was separated, allowing for three matches to be played at once and all games were contested in a fierce, but fair and competitive manner. Goals were scored, tackles were made and great fun was had by all of the teams. A highlight for many were the post match teas, provided by our superb catering team, and were much needed after the energetic pace of the matches! Congratulations went to Parbold Douglas Academy and The Redeemer for winning the Cup and Plate Competitions respectively. We look forward to the remainder of the sporting season under the fantastic floodlights.

Junior Sport

Students at the Junior School have had a busy season of sport, with Cross Country fixtures being one of the main highlights.



Blackburn Primary Schools' Cross Country



The first of three cross country events in the Blackburn Primary Schools' league took place at QEGS. Boys and girls from Years 4, 5 and 6 arrived in high spirits having competed excellently at Rossall the previous week.

The boys were first to race and it was a magnificent all-round performance with Edward Lee and Finlay Testa finishing third and fourth respectively, Jonathan Brindle coming in 20th place and Adam Davenport, Oliver Oakley and

Jack Davies all finishing in respectable places, ensuring a great result for the boys' team.

More was to come in the girls' race and the result was better than many had imagined with all six runners finishing in the top twenty; Hollie Cubbon in second place followed by Aisha Sykes, Kate Deegan, Amy Dixon, Lola Baron and Ruby Williams who completed the order. Congratulations to all of our runners.

AJIS Cross Country

On an uncharacteristically sunny day at Rossall School, Fleetwood, our intrepid Cross Country teams took to the fields and sand dunes in the annual AJIS Cross Country event.

The Year 5 boys' team got off to an enthusiastic start with Jonathan Brindle and William Ormisher joining the team from Year 4. The boys encouraged each other and put in an extremely good performance. Our Year 5 girls - helped by Katy Ninan and Isabelle Haslam from Year 4 - also ran well. Congratulations went to Kate Deegan for an excellently paced race and her reward of a bronze medal for the third girl home.

After a positive performance from our Year 6 boys, the Year 6 girls' race got underway and knowing that the team gained 3rd place medals the previous year, expectations were high. They did not disappoint and managed to finish 3rd overall in the team event; Hollie Cubbon finished in 2nd place overall - an improvement on her 3rd place position last year - well done! Congratulations went to all of our Cross Country runners - you were amazing!



Our footballers have been in action this term and have enjoyed improving their skills in various fixtures

North West Cross Country Championships

28 boys and girls from the Junior and Senior Schools competed in the St. Mary's Hall annual North West Cross Country Championships. It was an extremely wet and windy day, but that did not dampen the spirits of our great runners who all did tremendously well!



The U11 races were very competitive and the course was the longest and most difficult of the season so far. Both teams dug in deep in the harsh conditions and performed exceptionally well. Congratulations went to Hollie Cubbon and Finlay Testa who were the first girl and boy back for Westholme respectively.

Westholme's U13 teams settled into the race well and after the first lap were placed in some very good positions.

Their fell running experience came in useful for the small but steep hills on the course. William Couch was our first boy back finishing in 11th place and Charlotte Corrigan was the first girl back, finishing in 8th place.

Well done to all the runners involved, not only for your great efforts on the day, but all the training sessions you have endured throughout the year!

Senior Sport

This term, boys and girls have competed in an array of sporting fixtures and events and we have been fortunate to celebrate some amazing achievements.

National Schools' Netball Championships

Westholme's U14 and U16 netball teams competed in the National Schools' Netball Tournament at Pendle Vale sports complex in Nelson.

Despite torrential rain on the day, both teams played extremely well against strong opposition from schools across Lancashire. The teams played in a round robin group stage before competing in the semi-finals and finals.

Our U14 team played well and came third in their group whilst our U16 team won every match in their group stage, playing some very impressive netball. In the nail biting final match against St Cecilia's, we unfortunately lost 7-8, meaning that we finished 2nd in the whole of Lancashire; what a fantastic achievement! The team will now go through to the regional round in January; good luck!



U14 Netball Team



U16 Netball Team

BDSSA Hockey Champions!

Our Hockey teams have enjoyed a very successful season so far. The U14 and U16 teams have played particularly well and both won all their matches convincingly to be crowned the BDSSA Hockey Champions for 2015/2016 in their respective age groups. Congratulations.



U14 BDSSA Hockey Champions



U16 BDSSA Hockey Champions

Football Skills

This term, Senior School boys have been enjoying football training sessions with former Blackburn Rovers and Scotland International star, Kevin Gallacher. On Tuesday evenings Year 7 and 8 students have been fine tuning their dribbling skills whilst on Thursdays Year 9 and 10 boys have been working on improving their passing and accuracy. Senior School PE Teacher, Mr Warburton commented, "We are very lucky to be able to call on someone with such expertise, and are extremely grateful to Kevin for passing on his valuable knowledge."



Badminton

Westholme competed in the first round of the Centre Parcs National Schools' Badminton Tournament. We entered two teams into the competition and both played well with our U14B team finishing in 3rd position and our U14A team winning all of their group matches. The U14A team will go on to represent Blackburn with Darwen in the Schools' county round of this competition next term. Good luck, team!

FOCUS ON... DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

Westholme has always been at the forefront of innovation and the latest additions to the Design Technology Department at the Senior School are testament to that. A brand new laser cutter and 3D printer are welcome additions to the Design Technology suite to aid students in their studies and further the boundaries of their imagination.

Westholme Life spoke to one of our Design Technology teachers, Mr Patrick for the 'inside track'! He explained that using the 3D printer results in "more accurate pieces created in far less time, as students often struggle to identify issues in their prototype designs on the computer. Having a physical copy of their product allows them to detect any problems with greater efficiency and accuracy".



He goes onto say, "these can then be modified on the computer using the 3D CAD (Computer Aided Design) software package, which means that students do not have to start the design process again from scratch".

The 3D printer has been used by Year 10 GCSE students to create stands for small technological items, such as iPods, phones and game controllers. The 3D plastic models act as a testing tool to allow students to identify any problems in their designs before casting them in more durable materials, such as metal.

The laser cutter has also been well utilised since its arrival. Kindly funded by the Westholme Association it is fast becoming an integral piece of equipment. Year 9 students are currently enjoying using it to produce 'nets' from acrylic

sheets, which will then be folded to make a small storage device. It is particularly effective for plastics as the heat of the beam polishes the edge whilst cutting, thus making the use of the 'buffing machine' obsolete.

"These new pieces of equipment are a significant development for the Design Technology Department and are enabling students to complete projects with more accuracy and precision."

The machines will also help 'bridge the gap' between School and industry as students can see how products are mass-produced. We look forward to seeing how this subject develops over the coming months.



Alumni Reunion

A successful reunion lunch for leavers from the 1930s-1960s was held at Senior School. The group of former students reminisced fondly about their time at School whilst enjoying a fabulous buffet lunch in the Learning Resource Centre.

Conversation flowed as the school uniform, changes in the curriculum and their favourite teachers were all discussed. Commercial Director, Mrs Davenport, even commented that she could see the familiar 'Westholme spirit' in all of the guests!

Old friendships were rekindled and new relationships were formed as both

old boys and girls mused over archive photographs and even found their names in the admissions registers.

Some Sixth Form students also attended the event and it was a wonderful opportunity for them to learn about Westholme traditions from years gone by. It really was a special afternoon and another superb Westholme event.



Healthcare Careers Conference

Aspiring Doctors, Radiologists, Physiotherapists and Nurses were welcomed to Westholme for a 'hands on' Careers in Healthcare Conference, sponsored by BMI Beardwood Hospital.



Almost 100 students from Westholme and five other local schools were able to attend a wide variety of interactive workshops, allowing them to explore what a future successful career in Healthcare might entail. The students were able to experience firsthand the different techniques used by Physiotherapists, gained an insight into the day in the life of a GP, honed their Hospital Theatre skills and investigated the modern day life of a Nurse. Careers and roles in Radiology and Pharmacy were also on the agenda in order to ensure that the students gained a real insight into the many facets of working in the Healthcare sector. Visitors and Westholme students were greatly inspired by the work of the BMI team and our thanks are extended to them for giving their time and expertise so generously.



L - R: Angela Meadows, Lindsey Sharples, Elizabeth Barker, Emma Sexton. Some of the representatives from BMI Beardwood Hospital.



Trips Galore

Learning at Westholme takes place outdoors as well as in the classroom. This term has certainly been no exception and students from all year groups have visited many interesting places to enhance their learning.

A

A Year 10 Geography field trip to the Yorkshire Dales National Park to study the impact of visitor pressure at Malham village.

B GCSE and A-level artists visit 'The World Goes Pop' exhibition at the Tate Modern, London.

C Year 1 visited Beardwood Hospital as part of their topic on 'People who help us'.

D Year 10 EPR students visit Manjushri Kadampa Meditation Centre in Ulverston to spend time with the Buddhist community.

E Sixth Form students found out about a variety of courses and universities at the UK University Search HE Fair.

F Year 6 learnt about life as a Victorian Apprentice when they visited Quarry Bank Mill.

G Year 4 pupils enjoy the DEWA Roman Experience in Chester.

H Westholme's Human Rights Group Leaders watch a screening of 'He Named me Malala'.

I James Hall SPAR welcomed Sixth Form Business students for a day of interactive learning.

J Year 1 experience a Victorian Christmas at Judges Lodgings in Lancaster.

K Westholme Physicists enjoyed a lecture at the University of Liverpool.

L Westholme students travelled to Old Trafford to watch Manchester United play Ipswich Town in a league match.



C



L

VISITORS

We have welcomed a variety of visitors into School this term who have helped enrich the students' learning and bring the subjects they study to life. From Nursery through to Sixth Form, all students have benefited from listening to experts in their field and we would like to say thank you to each and every one for giving up their precious time.



Amanda Parker, High Sheriff of Lancashire, visited Westholme to talk to students in Years 10-13. The High Sheriff is the Queen's representative in the county for all matters relating to the Judiciary and the maintenance of law and order; much of the High Sheriff's year is spent supporting and encouraging the voluntary and statutory organisations who work in Lancashire. She presented a witty, erudite account of her life and told tales of her school life and provided anecdotes about memorable members of staff. Through the recollection of a

surprising encounter of sexism in the workplace, Mrs Parker encouraged students to overcome challenges they might face and to not become downhearted when facing adversity. Her inspiring words rang true to Westholme spirit and many students felt an affinity with the topics discussed. Mrs Parker's entrepreneurial skills were illustrated by her many successful small businesses and the theme of perseverance underpinned the speech, encouraging students to not give up in times of hardship.



Junior School students welcomed representatives from the charity, Barnado's, for a special assembly.



Linguist, David Crystal, visited Senior School to deliver his lecture 'The Story of English'.



GCSE Computing students welcomed industry expert, Michael Cain, for the annual BIMA Digital Day.



Best selling children's author, Lauren Child, visited our Junior School to give a special talk to students in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Nursery and Year 2 children enjoyed a visit from the Fire Brigade.

Start Your Educational Journey at Westholme

Here at Westholme, we are committed to providing the highest quality care and education where children can grow and develop in their own unique way. This has never been more true in terms of our Early Years provision at the Nursery and Infant School.

In September, we welcomed our first cohort of babies from the age of 3 months into our Nursery. This new initiative has proved to be extremely popular for local families and proudly sporting their Westholme bibs, the babies are settling into Nursery life well. We believe that early childhood education theory is key; babies and young children learn best when the environment and subsequent teaching is supported by hands-on discovery, asking questions and thinking out ideas. Activities for our babies include sand, water and creative play, with music classes, story time, one to one sessions and role play. Twinkle Toes, Baby Signing, Forest School Fridays and Bilingual sessions, help create a vibrant co curricular plan all year round. With experienced Nursery manager, Jo Church, at the helm, and a stable staff team, our babies and toddlers are certainly in safe hands.

Another significant change in the Early Years stage at Westholme is that children attending our Pre School can take full advantage of our 'Wrap Around Care' package, meaning they are able to attend from 7.30am – 6.00pm, 50 weeks of the year. This, along with a full programme of holiday activities offered on a flexible basis, allows parents to find a tailor made solution for their needs as a family.

Our Pre School children enjoy a diverse and stimulating programme of activities. Swimming lessons in the pool at the Senior School have also begun; session one started by building their confidence in the water and the children enjoyed splashing around in both the baby and the big pool. Year 2 teacher and swimming instructor, Mrs Sutcliffe commented, "It is a wonderful opportunity for the boys and girls to learn to swim at such a young age, and I am excited to be teaching our Pre School children important, lifesaving skills that will stay with them for life".



Another exciting initiative for the children has been the introduction of weekly Mandarin lessons, with specialist teacher, Mrs Yibing Jolly, who also teaches at the Senior School.

'Stay and Play' sessions for Nursery and Pre School children and 'Come and Learn' afternoons for those in Reception are also eagerly anticipated. This is where parents are invited into the classroom for an afternoon each term and can take part in various activities with their children such as outdoor play and arts and crafts. Acting Head, Mrs Dixon commented, "The children take great pride in showing their parents around the classroom and really enjoy doing some craft activities with them during these sessions. We love having them in to share the experience of daily Westholme life!"

"At Westholme, we recognise the importance of learning new skills whilst building confidence and self-esteem"

The year groups have also been working with Mr Barrett, from Just Grow Forest Schools. So far this term, they have benefited from two of his 'adventure days'. At Westholme, we recognise the importance of learning new skills whilst building confidence and self-esteem in a natural and safe environment and the Forest School days are testament to that way of thinking.

The Early Years programme at Westholme is stimulating, caring and nurturing. As the children work their way up through the year groups, they are well prepared for the next stage of their journey.



Care is taken to ensure that consistency, routine and familiarity are maintained through a programme of transition visits and they soon become established as part of our Infant School. It really is a wonderful opportunity to be starting your educational journey at Westholme!

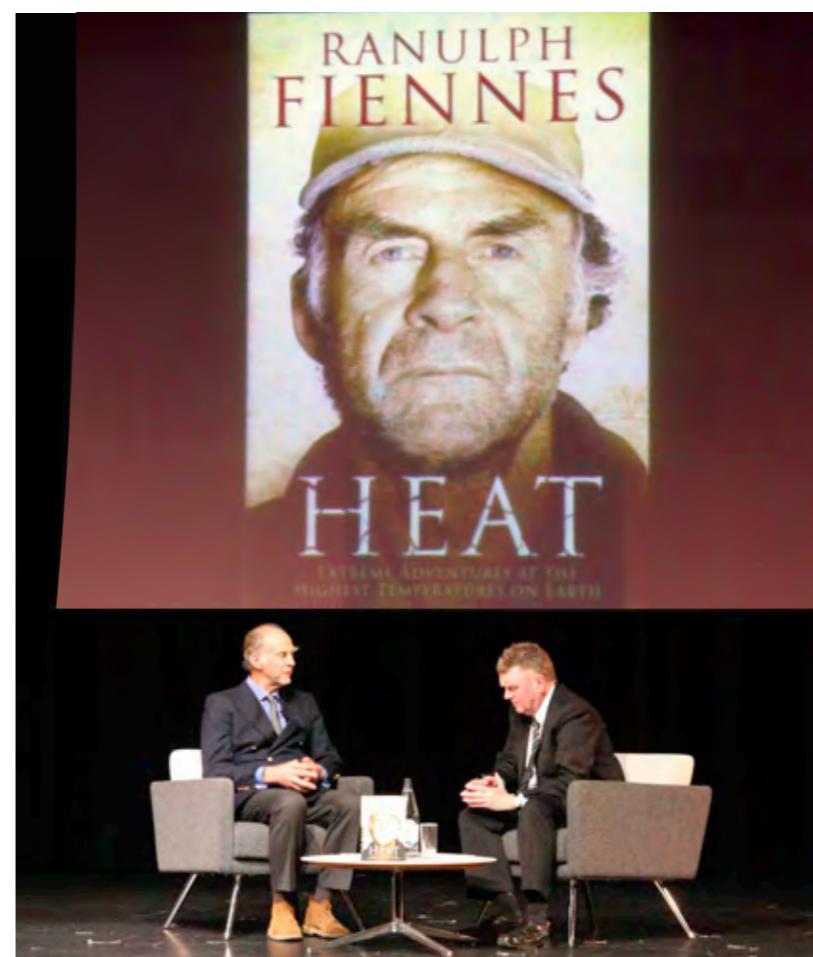


We were delighted to welcome Sir Ranulph Fiennes to Westholme School, for an intimate 'Interview With' session, conducted by John Gilmore, from Radio Lancashire and in conjunction with Silverwood Book Events. The Westholme community gathered on a wet and windy evening, in the Croston Theatre to hear astounding snippets from his many adventures.

We've all heard the clichéd phrase, 'live life to the full', but Ranulph Fiennes is one of the rare human beings who can honestly claim to have done just that; who else has managed to run 7 marathons in 7 days on 7 different continents?!

Sir Ran came to Westholme to talk about his new book, 'Heat', which saw him compete in and finish the Marathon des Sables, arguably the toughest endurance race on the planet, crossing 156 miles of gruelling terrain over six days in the blisteringly hot fifty degree heat of the Saharan Desert.

Along with tales from his many expeditions, other anecdotes included memories from growing up in South Africa, his battle with vertigo (cured by walking up Mount Everest), and humorous recounts such as auditioning for the role of James Bond (only to be told he "looked like a farmer and his hands were too big!") which subsequently didn't land him the part!



Audience participation was also encouraged; he answered questions including what drives him to undertake such extreme adventures and even what he did with his fingers when he cut some of them off after getting frostbite!

Listening to him speak was in fact, an amazing experience. He has raised over 18 million pounds for Marie Curie by undertaking his many expeditions and his next adventure – although he was sworn to total secrecy about what it actually is – is set to raise a staggering 3 million pounds for the charity.

After having their copies of 'Heat' personally signed by Sir Ran, everyone left the theatre feeling enriched and inspired, if a little lazy!

We would like to say thank you to John Gilmore, for conducting the on stage interview and to Silverwood Book Events for co-ordinating the event with Westholme School. Our sincere thanks however, must go to Sir Ran. Your talk was inspirational to say the least and we are truly, very grateful.

FUNDRAISING FUN

The entire Westholme community has been involved in a variety of charitable events this term and staff, children and parents at all sites have supported charities including Age UK, Children in Need, Macmillan Cancer Support and Operation Christmas Child.



Free the Westholme One!

In aid of Age UK, Mrs Gough was 'arrested' during a Senior School assembly by former student, PC Sarah Harman (née Snowdon). Her crime: being relentlessly cheerful! Elaine Jennings, from Age UK Blackburn with Darwen then took to the stage, informing students that Mrs Gough would be released on the condition that £500 could be raised as bail money. Ms Jennings also talked to the pupils about the work Age UK carries out, as the charity offers support for those over fifty who require aid with housing, day-care and dementia support.

Throughout the day, students at both the Junior and Senior Schools dug deep in to their pockets to help free the 'prisoner'. Meanwhile, at the police station, Mrs Gough liaised with her fellow 'inmates' and police officers and even had her fingerprints taken. She jumped for joy upon hearing the news of her release and was happy to learn that her 'ordeal' raised £685. A big thank you to Mrs Gough, PC Sarah Harman, Elaine Jennings and all those who donated money for Age UK.



Children in Need

Children in Need was supported at the Nursery and Infant School this year in 'superhero' style. Nursery children brought in their favourite teddies while Infant School pupils had lots of fun dressing up as their favourite superhero or in their own clothes. At the Junior School, children accessorised their uniform with spots and dots! A grand total of £833 was raised, what a fantastic effort by everyone!



8T held a Sweet Sale in aid of Epilepsy Awareness Month.



Infant School Nativities raised money for Action for Pulmonary Fibrosis and Cancer Research UK.



Year 10 students held a cake sale in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support.



Westholme students filled shoeboxes for the Samaritan's Purse, Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Appeal.



Target 1,000

Head Girl, Flora Robson, along with Senior Prefects, Elysia Kenyon and Sofia Talbot, launched a school wide appeal to collect 1,000 donated items for Nightsafe in the lead up to Christmas. Nightsafe are a Blackburn based charity who help local homeless teenagers. Inspired by the High Sheriff of Lancashire, Amanda Parker, and her role as ambassador for the local charity, Sixth Form students took the initiative to encourage all members of our School community to think of others. Donations including new toothbrushes, deodorant, shower gel and shampoo were received with great thanks. Well done, Westholme.

WESTHOLME ASSOCIATION

The Westholme Association has had an extremely busy term and the team have once again raised a huge amount of money for the benefit of the children at Westholme.



CHRISTMAS FAYRE

The Christmas Fayre was held on the first Saturday in December and despite the damp and dreary weather that threatened to hamper their efforts, members of the Association successfully transformed Wilmar Lodge into a wonderfully festive Christmas Kingdom.

As visitors arrived and made their way through the various stalls, Christmas tunes were playing to immerse people into the spirit of the season. A festive tombola, Secret Santa bags, lucky dip and beautiful winter plants were all on offer to tempt the many guests who attended. A highlight for many had to be the Reindeer Rodeo attraction which saw children and adults take on the challenge in a bid to stay on for the longest amount of time. A visit to see Father Christmas in his grotto



also proved to be a popular choice for many and he merrily chatted away to the children who visited him and gave them a special gift. Games including 'Pluck a Turkey', 'Rudolph Hoopla' and 'Hook a Bauble' were hosted in the Bungalow and craft activities such as gingerbread decorating and making bags of reindeer dust were also enjoyed by many.

It really was a wonderful event and a fabulous way of ensuring the festive spirit at Westholme was definitely flowing. Congratulations to the Westholme Association and to everyone who attended to make it a fabulous family occasion. A staggering £4468.81 was raised.



QUIZ NIGHT

A fun evening was had by those who attended the Westholme Association Quiz Night, held at Blackburn Rugby Club.

Expertly hosted by Quiz Master, Mick Green, teams battled it out to become Champions for 2015. A raffle was also held to help raise money and thanks must go to everyone who participated in this, along with the quiz. The main winners of the night, however, were the team known as 'Four Blondes in a Boat', who retained their title once again – well done!



The Magic of the Season

Westholme's Christmas season began with fabulous Nativity performances from children at the Infant School.

Humph the Camel

The Nativity season at the Nursery & Infant School began with the Pre School and Reception performance of 'Humph the Camel'. This was the first time the two year groups came together for their Nativity and it really was a performance not to be missed.

The play tells a story about a grumpy camel who changes his tune when he meets the new-born King. Humph the grumpy camel normally shows not the slightest interest in anything. However, to everyone's surprise and delight, when he meets the new-born King he just can't contain his excitement and joy!

The children told the story well with confident and clear voices accompanied by tuneful singing – some of the songs even had actions! The entire cast were clearly delighted to perform in front of such an appreciative audience. It truly was a wonderful start to the magical season at Westholme!



It's a party!

The invitations were unusual... the guests were unlikely... and the venue was unconventional. But what a party! This year's Year 1 and 2 Nativity followed the progress of the angels as they deliver unusual invitations to attend an unconventional party.

With the Croston Theatre as the setting for the performance, the children took to the stage and guided the audience through the story perfectly. The narrators told the story with confident and clear voices – no mean feat in front of a packed Theatre! All of the characters had the audience entranced and the energy given by each and every child as they sang and danced their way through the story added that extra bit of sparkle!

Well done to everyone involved; it really was a fantastic party!



Peace & Harmony

The spectacular Cathedral was once again the venue for the Junior and Senior School Carol Services, in keeping with Westholme tradition.

The Junior School hosted their annual service with pride.

The performance of Year 5's 'Carols in the Cathedral' began proceedings before the traditional order of service followed.

Nativity characters acted out their roles with ease and helped to convey the true meaning of Christmas to a receptive congregation. Tuneful singers, confident readers and marvellous musical groups all performed to ensure the service was perfect in every way.



The Senior School Carol Service was equally as uplifting and saw the whole Westholme community gather in the majestic surroundings for an evening of religious celebration. The inspiring evening saw readers, musicians and choristers collaborate to create a special atmosphere of peace and harmony. It really was a superb Service.



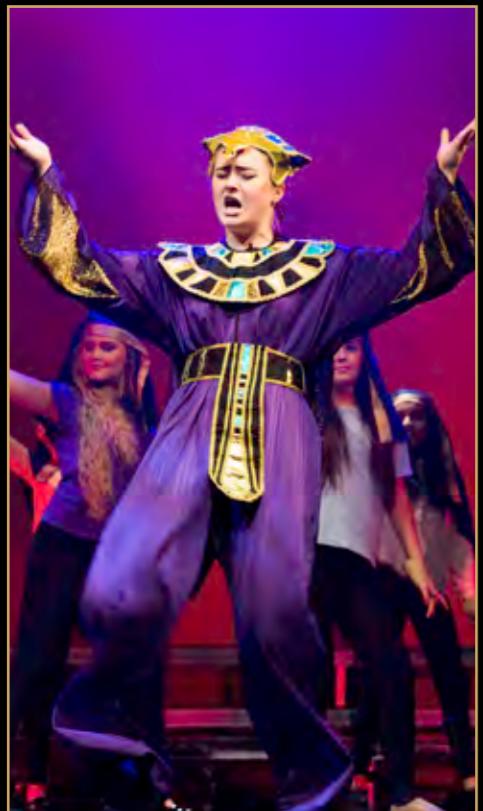
DRAMA SHOWCASE

The inaugural Drama Showcase performance delights audiences in the Croston Theatre.

Many students at Senior School took to the stage for this new event which featured acts from household favourites such as *Matilda* and the *Addams Family*, to classic Shakespeare scenes. The audience were guided through a magnificent journey of dance and musical theatre which, alongside the various monologues, demonstrated the diverse skills of our students. It was testament to the whole production team that members of the audience were roaring with laughter one minute and moved to tears the next. Costumes, lighting and set design also helped to create a memorable performance.

The Showcase allowed many of our younger students to play a more prominent role in a Westholme production and the cast worked well together, showing how teamwork, communication and discipline are all vital skills to ensure such a polished performance.

Audience members were not disappointed; huge congratulations to everyone involved.



Spring Term 2016

Wednesday 6th January - Wednesday 23rd March

Half term - Monday 15th February - Friday 19th February inclusive

Summer Term 2016

Tuesday 12th April - Wednesday 6th July

Half term - Monday 30th May - Friday 3rd June inclusive

Autumn Term 2016

Monday 5th September - Thursday 15th December

Half term - Monday 24th October - Friday 4th November inclusive



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